

LES GIRLS

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BOYS WILL BE GIRLS

VOLUME 1 NUMBER 3

HEATHER FORTAINE:
"MARILYN" REVISITED

LES GIRLS COVERS
THE BATTLE OF
THE V.I.P.'s!!!

THE
TRANSVESTITE-
TRANSSEXUAL
CONNECTION —

a probing look at
the difference!

QUEENS ON
PARADE —
the galas and the balls!!!

AMANDA —
a striking beauty!

Plus: Jennifer, Fassbinder's
latest transsexual film
and much, much more!



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BOYS WILL BE GIRLS

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NUMBER 3

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Editorial Director
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Art Director
CHARLES DENNING
Associate Editor
RENE WILSON
Editorial Consultant
SHIRLEY PATTERSON
Editorial Assistant

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EDITORIAL

MEDIA EXPOSURE

The transsexual community has long suffered as an underground sexual lifestyle. The mainstream of society has tended to regard the transsexual as a freak, a sexual being whose presence is indicative of some kind of general degeneracy in society. The media has treated the transsexuals in the same manner, exploiting their sexual proclivity as some kind of bizarre and humorous episode in the parade of human nature. The transsexual community has long searched for a champion, someone with the power and the resources to tell their story as it really exists. So, when Western International approached the transsexual community with their project, "Vera", the enthusiasm was rampant. Here was a production company wanting to do a film on transsexuals, a love story which would hopefully show the reality of transsexualism as it exists today. Auditions for "Vera" were held on the west coast and in the east, and hundreds of transsexuals allowed themselves to be videotaped in the hopes of getting a part in this revolutionary film. In doing so, each hopeful signed a release giving the producers full rights to the taped audition. Now, some ten months after the auditions, there is no film, no schedule of shooting, not even a star. The rumors floating within the underground say that

the producers have used the audition tapes to construct a documentary film about transsexuals; and that these same producers have actually sold this film overseas. We at *Les Girls* supported the making of "Vera", and in the past issues have reported with great enthusiasm on the progress of the film. Therefore we felt justified in asking the producers of "Vera" to step forth and clear the air. We therefore ask them: Is there going to be a film entitled "Vera"? Is there any truth to the rumors that you have taken the audition tapes and "ripped off" the transsexual

community by selling these as a documentary? The transsexual community has been the victim of prejudice and misunderstanding for too long. These people are living on the edge, and they are vulnerable to exploitation. If, indeed, you have exploited them, we challenge you to step forward and demonstrate at least half the courage that the transsexual community as a whole has shown!

M. B. West

M. B. WEST
Editor



M.B.'S WILD, WILD, WEST!

Once again, we present our editor, M.B. West, in a fashion parade guaranteed to shock, excite and outrage!



M. B. In leather, demonstrating the mistress side as he purrs his way through the dungeons of his mind. It's M.B. as only he can be—demure, sexy and bitchy!





M.B. as the queen, a Salome with a whip. The hair is of the highest fashion now on the scene, the robes of another era when women ruled the Nile. The look and the feel are as mysterious as the sphinx herself.



The Orient calls M.B. as he dons the mysterious dress of the mystical ladies of the East. Inscrutable? With M.B., it is a real possibility.



Above, M.B. displays the look of the Parisian lady, a true coquette.



On the right, we see the incomparable editor in the role of the leather mistress.

Heather

A beauty whose Monroe impersonation has rocked the nation. There is no one who does it better than Heather!





Heather comes to us from Huntsville, Alabama, where she began at an early age transforming herself into a truly beautiful woman. From there she began traveling the nightclub circuit throughout the South, establishing a reputation as one of the greats.





Heather has traveled the world, astounding and delighting audiences everywhere. But through it all she has remained loyal to her roots, returning to Huntsville to the open arms of her friends and family. Heather, a true home spun girl.







In her various poses and costumes, Heather possesses the talent to mimic the great beauties of the stage and screen. A multi-faceted human being, Heather loves to read, to act and to educate herself. She hopes someday to find the right man and settle down to a quiet life.





Heather is as beautiful as they come. Her looks have taken her far. But she is a transsexual whose sense goes much deeper. As a spokeswoman for the community, and as a force of the future, Heather's star is just beginning to shine!



QUEENS ON PARADE

Every year, throughout Los Angeles, glamorous events are staged to choose the reigning queen of various balls and galas. *Les Girls* now takes you on a journey to some of the most elaborate of them all!



Hollywood, California, the center of female impersonators in America. A city featuring the most dynamic and beautiful of artistes who have perfected the art of impersonating women. Typical of Hollywood, the men who entered the "Gay West Coast" contest demonstrated an incredible talent with make-up, fashion and hair styles. This was to be expected since Hollywood has long been the capital of illusion and glamour!



**MISS GAY WEST
COAST BALL
AT
CONTINENTAL CLUB
HOLLYWOOD, CA**



The beauties who entered the "Miss Gay West Coast" contest demonstrated their talent and their beauty. They came from all walks of life and from all sectors of the nation. Some were professionals, others strictly amateurs. Some displayed perfected talent on stage while others showed raw genius.



**L.A. CORONATION
EMPRESS BALL
AT
PROUD BIRD
INGLEWOOD, CA.**



Throughout Los Angeles, the contests continued. The "Empress Ball" is one of the most popular and glamorous, being held at the Proud Bird in Inglewood, California. Here we see some of the beauties who participated, and the coronation of the queen herself.



Santa Monica, one of the world's most beautiful cities and sight of the Santa Monica Coronation. It is only fitting that the glamour and the glitter be staged by the sea in this gorgeous coastal town. The contestants reflect its beauty and charm.



**SANTA MONICA
CORONATION
AT
SANTA MONICA, CA**

JENNIFER

Jennifer, an exotic queen who brings back the beauty and the charm of another age. An exquisite statue in gold!







The many moods of Jennifer reflect her complex and exotic being. She moves quickly from the ancient goddess of gold to the modern temptress. She is playful and seductive, demanding and with a touch of arrogance. Jennifer can change her moods with subtlety and flair, with charm and grace. She is never to be underestimated!





Jennifer lives within the land of royalty, where the beautiful are treated with the god-like worship due them. She stands alone as a true goddess, a sensuous beauty wrapped in the fine diamonds and furs of another age.







Her moods shift, and her desires fluctuate. She is at once the playful innocent, turning quickly into the womanly temptress. Jennifer knows her instincts, and is willing to let them flow.





BATTLE OF THE V.I.P.'S



They are the cream of the crop, the best in the business. Their presence turns heads wherever they go, their beauty excites and arouses. They are the perfectionists of their craft, the best at what they do. And when they come together to do battle, they reign as duelists amongst the gods. They are the warriors in the Battle of the V.I.P.'s.





On stage, they run the gamut of female impersonation. From the saucy lass to the bitch queen, they present to the world the best of their profession. To watch them is to be witness to the state of the art, to see the ultimate in female perfection. The Battle of the V.I.P.'s is not just a contest, it's an event!

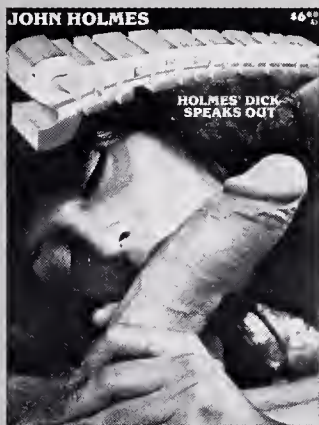


The audience becomes as much a part of the show as the contestants themselves. The beautiful impersonators feel no hesitation to jump off the stage and cavort a little with the patrons, showing them what makes a true winner. But the real essence of the Battle of the V.I.P.'s are the beautiful people—all winners!

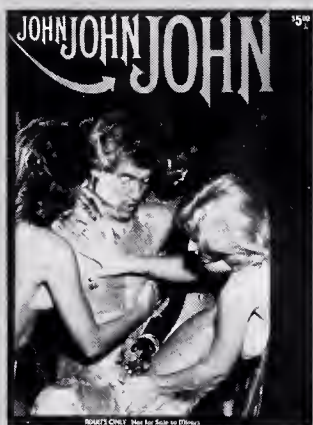


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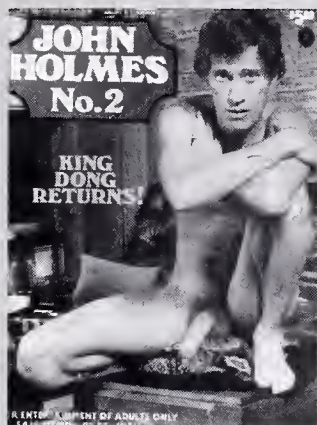
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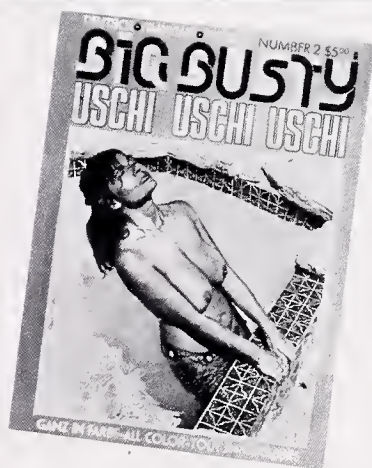


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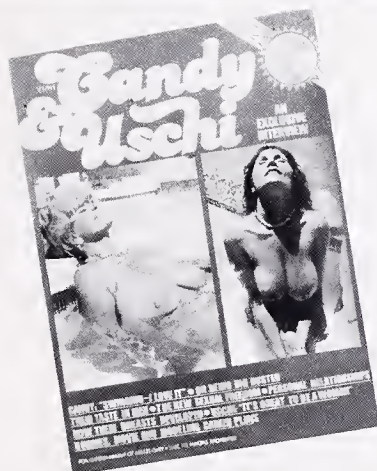


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**FOR
SPECIAL
INTEREST
TRANSEXUAL
REVEALED**

THE TRANSVESTITE ~TRANSSEXUAL CONNECTION

**Confusion over the two
exists, but the differ-
ence is stark!
They are both the
same, and they should
be understood.**

If there exists one area of sexuality in which confusion and misunderstanding exist, it is the area of transsexualism and transvestism. It is very common to hear descriptions of transsexuals being, in fact, definitions of transvestites. And vice versa. Even those in the mass media seem to deal with both as one in the same.

There is a tremendous difference between a transvestite and a transsexual. The gap between the two is as wide as that which exists between a homosexual and a heterosexual. It is a difference that is profound and should be understood by everyone interested in the sexual climate of the 1980's.

The main difference between a transvestite and a transsexual is sexuality. The transvestite can be any number of sexual personalities—from a straight, heterosexual male to a homosexual drag queen. The transsexual, however, is distinctly defined as a man, or a woman, who identifies with the opposite sex. In doing so, he or she pursues dressing in the style of the opposite gender, and extends himself or herself to the final commitment of having a sex-change operation. The transsexual, then, is an individual who seeks to become a member of the opposite gender, while the transvestite retains his or her sexual identity and simply dresses in the clothing of the opposite sex.

The transvestite has been with us throughout the history of civilization. In many ancient tribes and societies, it was not uncommon for males to dress

in the clothing of women during fertility rituals where the female was accredited with the powers of nature to produce a good crop. In the theater, especially, transvestism was quite pronounced. In the Orient, select theater groups employed young men to play the roles of women. And in the Elizabethan theater, where women were discouraged from acting on the stage, men constantly dressed for the part and played their roles.

In the modern media, transvestism has shown itself time and time again. Such popular stars as Milton Berle made himself infamous by appearing on the Texaco Hour, an early television variety show, in drag. And the wildly popular, "Some Like It Hot", had Jack Lemmon and Tony Curtis parading around as women in their attempt to seduce the beautiful Marilyn Monroe.

The essential ingredient of these transvestite exhibitions was shock. Comedy has long employed the outrageous notion of a man dressed as a woman to incite laughter from its audiences. It is a gimmick that has worked time and time again, and still remains effective. And underlying that gimmick is one of the basic motivations that drive a man into transvestism.

The transvestite possesses some basic motivations that do not necessarily reflect a sexual need. One of those is his desire to shock society. As an act of pure rebellion, or even larcenous fun, many transvestites enjoy the reaction when they exhibit themselves

in women's clothing. Accompanying this is the desire to fool the public, the thrill they receive when they are able to pass themselves off as a woman, or a man.

Of course, there are other, more sexual motivations at work, and this is where the transvestite begins to move further into the realm of the transsexual.

There are some transvestites who, for one reason or another, desire to make themselves into beautiful women. They seek to equal the beauty of women, to realize that beauty within themselves. Their dressing in women's clothing allows them to compete with the female, and oftentimes allows them to seduce themselves. This type of transvestite truly begins to cross the border into the world of the transsexual, and oftentimes, it is at this stage that the transvestite demonstrates true transsexual attributes.

Fetishism may also play a strong and powerful role in the motivations of a transvestite. A man who is sexually addicted to a certain article of clothing, say a pair of lace panties, may find that by wearing that piece of clothing he is integrating the object of his fetishism more profoundly into his sexual life. Many transvestites have become fixated at an early age by a woman and her clothing, a seek to duplicate the sexual stimulus of that fixation through wearing clothes that are very much like those worn by the object of the early sexual lust. This fetishistic element does not mean a man wants to become a woman, but only that he is strongly fixated by certain articles of clothing.



The transvestite is considered psychologically harmless by most experts in the field. They cite transvestism as an innocent means of living out fantasies, of outraging people, and even of satisfying a fetishistic desire. The problems, or the trauma, these experts claim, begins to form when the transvestite begins seeing himself as a woman, and begins feeling that he is, in fact, a woman trapped inside a man's body.

The most common thing you will hear from a transsexual is that they are really a member of the opposite sex, trapped inside a body dictated to them through the wiles of natural selection. In essence, this is the foundation of the transsexual's motivations and psychology. He, or she, feels the presence of the opposite gender to be dramatically overbalanced and because of that, seeks to somehow alter the natural state of his or her being.

The transsexual commonly moves through a series of stages towards a full realization of a gender change. The first stage is realized normally at a young age, when the transsexual feels a definite alienation from members of the opposite sex. It is at this stage that the transsexual will often begin behaving like the transvestite, dressing up in women's clothing (or, if a woman, dressing in men's clothing). The primary difference

between the transvestite and the transsexual that will exhibit itself here is one of sexuality.

While the transvestite will retain his or her sexuality, the transsexual will exhibit tendencies towards the opposite sex. If a male, he will begin to alter his mannerisms to those of a woman. Speech patterns will change, emotional responses will fluctuate, and the general temper of the individual will begin to lean towards that of the opposite sex.

In the case of some of the world's most notorious transsexuals, early transgression towards the affected behavior of the opposite sex was noticed by parents, and the subjects were then taken to physicians who ran tests on hormone balance. One of these, the beautiful and internationally known Coccinelle, produced tests in which it was determined that the balance between the male and female hormones definitely leaned towards the female. In many cases, early detection of the hormone imbalance will cause a transsexual to think over the proposition of taking hormones to emphasize that drift towards the opposite gender. In Coccinelle's case, the hormone treatment worked with great effectiveness.

Once the transsexual has passed through the early stage of transvestism, he or she then moves into an area known as "pre-operative" transsexualism.

At this point, the sexuality of the transsexual should be discussed. It is commonly assumed that a man who wishes to become a woman is a homosexual. In many instances, men who demonstrate transsexual qualities are practicing homosexuals. But in truth, they are homosexual only because they are attracted to men. A homosexual is a man who seeks sex with other men. The transsexual is a man who seeks to become a woman, with sex almost a secondary consideration of that desire. There have been many cases of transsexualism in which



the subject did not have sex with members of his or her own sex until a transformation had been completed.

The transsexual, then, having moved from the ranks of the transvestite begins an earnest and emotionally charged voyage into the frontier of the opposite sex. Men will seek hormone treatments that emphasize the secondary female sex characteristics such as breast development, smoothness of the skin and a lessening of bodily hair. They will have electrolysis performed on them for the permanent removal of hair, and engage in skin treatments to insure themselves of having a feminine tone.

Women who are moving over into the other side of the sexual spectrum will begin exercising to develop their 'masculine' physique, will alter their speech patterns and their dress, and essentially everything within their power to alter their being into that of a male.

This pre-operative stage has provided society with a large number of transsexuals who are commonly referred to as 'she-males'. They represent an underground community of men who have begun the transformation, but for one reason or another, have stopped short of having the sex change operation. Many of these men have had plastic surgery performed on their breasts, and as a result possess bountiful feminine breasts. And because of the



hormone treatments and other procedures, their bodies have become rounded and quite feminine. Of course, they dress and use make-up just as a woman would. In essence, they are women—except that they still possess their male genitalia.

Many of these transsexuals work in nightclubs which feature female impersonations. Others pursue 'straight' careers, passing themselves off as women and never revealing their true sexual identity. Still others discover that the pre-operative stage is unsatisfactory, and seek to have the surgery performed that will transform them into a complete woman.

In recent years, the sex change operation has gained notoriety through the auspices of such sex-change personalities as Renee Richards, Christine Jorgensen, and the aforementioned Coccinelle. Their stories are widely known, and the general public familiar with the irreversible commitment that they have made.

That commitment has recently come under fire by many members of the medical profession. The rate of sex change operations is growing each year, with more men and women wishing to be operated on and have their sexuality permanently altered. The medical is now questioning many of the procedures, and the psychological ramifications of such an operation. They are asking for a governmental body of experts to establish a national forum to determine and discuss the effects and problems of the sex change operation.

The operation itself has been performed on tens of thousands of individuals, with the greater number being male. The surgery involves the removal of the testicles, and then the hollowing out of the penis. The sensitive skin of the penis is then inverted and used as the inner wall of the newly constructed vagina. The vagina is constructed to be as much like a woman's as possible, and artificial devices are placed inside the newly formed tube

to guarantee that its shape is retained.

For women, the surgery involves the removal of the ovaries, uterus and the sealing up of the vagina. Artificial penises can now be constructed, using skin grafts from highly sensitized parts of the body. But there is no way for these penises to become erect and thus function as a normal male organ. Women who have had the operation oftentimes employ artificial penises to stimulate the sexual act. But the actual physical sensations enjoyed by men still remains out of reach.

The pre-operative and post-operative transsexual represent a difference as profound as the transvestite and the transsexual. The pre-operative transsexual is still living with a choice, a future "solution" whereby all his emotional and psychological problems will be answered as a result of the operation. In his mind, the "fantasy" of becoming that which he has always dreamed of being rests ahead. The post-operative transsexual, however, has made his or her commitment and must now make lifestyles and emotional entanglements accordingly.

There have been some famous cases of post-operative transsexuals that serve to illustrate one important point. And that is that once the operation is performed, the individual no longer looks upon himself or herself as a transsexual, but rather as a functioning member of a new sex. This factor is the one powerful difference between the transvestite, the pre-operative transsexual and the post-operative transsexual. The stages of flux and change no longer exist once the operation has been performed, and the individual becomes fully realized within the role of his new sexuality.

Many experts who are currently working within the area of sex changes and transformations believe that the pre-operative stages of transsexualism, going back as far as the transvestite, provide the individual with a fantasy dream which is, in itself, a goal. That dream allows them

to live and grow within an emotional middle ground, where it is always possible to return to their former self. These experts insist that the power which these individuals feel over their ability to play with natural sexuality allows them to enjoy a special feeling, to somehow develop a feeling of superiority over their straighter peers.

After two decades of studying transsexuals and the transvestites, many psychiatrists have expounded on this theory and taken it beyond the post-operative stage. They claim that the initial motivations which drive a transvestite to wear women's clothing oftentimes reflect the same motivations which spur on a transsexual. The need to outrage, to rise above natural fate, to parody societies' sexual roles comes into play. And the sense of power and enjoyment derived from crossing over rules with a strong force within these individuals. But, warn the experts, that heady fantasy may lead to a rash decision later on when the transsexual decides to commit fully to the sex change operation. It is then that he or she has made final breach, and the heady game itself has become a solid, and oftentimes frightening reality.

This final, and irreversible commitment separates the post-operative transsexual to a high degree from pre-ops and transvestites. A practicing transvestite may always revert to normal dress codes, and simply remove himself from situations in which he dresses like a woman. His choice is still widely available to him, and it is up to him to make that decision. There are no physical commitments which are difficult to reverse, only a mental decision is needed.

With the pre-operative transsexual, the situation may become a little more sticky. Many pre-ops engage in hormone treatments and breast implants, transforming their physical make-up up to the point of the

Continued on page 46

Amanda

An exquisite and beautiful
creature, alluring and sensual,
this is Amanda!







Amanda's beauty transcends the sexes, allowing for a voyage into the true erotic essence. Cat-like and seductive, Amanda will seduce even the most hardened. She is demure and aggressive, innocent and worldly. Amanda captures the basic essence of woman, and maintains her secret and mysterious powers. Amanda is unique and captivating!







There are few within the realm of the artiste who capture the subtle persona of the female. Amanda succeeds where many have failed. Her essence is one of eroticism unbridled, a sheer delight in the world of sensuality. Amanda is a true siren!



"IN A YEAR OF THIRTEEN MOONS"

Ranier Fassbinder, the genius of the German film renaissance, explores the life and world of the transsexual!



The transsexual is fast becoming one of the serious film maker's favorite subjects. Transsexualism allows the student of humanity to investigate the psychology of sex, the effect of sexual role playing within society and the drama of the male-female duality within every human being. The most recent entry into the serious study of transsexualism comes from Germany with Ranier Werner Fassbinder's latest film, *In A Year of Thirteen Moons*.

At the beginning of *Thirteen Moons*, director Fassbinder explains that every so often a lunar year will contain thirteen new moons. During these years, those of us who live by our emotions become especially susceptible to catastrophe and tragedy. Fassbinder explains that in the 20th Century alone, there are six of these years, and that the last occurred in 1978. It is during this year that his film takes place.

The lead character in *Thirteen Moons* is Elvira, a transsexual who has undergone the sex change operation. Elvira is a man who is living life as a woman. A human being whose emotional life is such that the peculiar effect of the thirteen moon year will influence and bring tragedy upon her.

Fassbinder's technique is one of dark and brutal absurdity. His characters flood the screen quickly, only to disappear without a forced logical explanation of their existence. In this film, Fassbinder uses Elvira as his guide through the various levels and stages of the inferno, with Elvira suffering each step of the way. And her suffering is both emotional and physical.

In the beginning of the film, the heroine is picked up by some roughs who physically beat her up. Returning to her apartment where she lives with her lover, Elvira is treated not to sympathy and help, but to a thrashing. She is



called a "bug" by her lover, and we begin to sense within the lead character a vapid state in which she functions as one would function in a void.

The brutal world of the transsexual is then portrayed as Elvira strikes out, meeting characters of coincidence who effect her passage. Fassbinder's major themes of brutality and violence are in great evidence in this film, creating an atmosphere wherein the heroine is in a continuous state of violent jeopardy. There is death all around; suicides and murder; emotional and spiritual death as well. The film is peopled by those who exist in a purgatory sense, halfway between heaven and hell. It is this mood that tells us a little about Fassbinder's editorial feeling towards transsexualism—or any sexual deviation for that matter.

The end of the film is an ironic shocker. Fassbinder traces Elvira back to her boyhood incarnation as Erwin, an unwanted child being raised by nuns in Catholic school. The child is emotionally crippled, and seeks love and attention wherever he can find it. In later life, that child will meet a millionaire who suggests that love might be offered if Erwin changed himself into a woman. This Erwin does, only to be abandoned afterwards. At the end of the film, Elvira comes full circle back to the original perpetrator of the sex change, and commits suicide. The darkly ironic twist adds to Fassbinder's generally pessemistic view of life; especially of those who live it somewhere in the middle.

The character of Elvira, around whom the film revolves, is a curious piece of writing. From the childhood when she was raised by nuns, Erwin later married and fathered children, working as a butcher. The sex change comes almost as a result of a quirky impulse rather than a result of a long studied inclination. It is here that Fassbinder avoids stereotypes in dealing with the transsexual problem, wandering outside the psychological realm. He does not attempt to make the viewer understand why a man would want to become a woman, and go through the traumatic experience of a sex change operation. Instead, the event happens and the audience is merely asked to accept it as a phenomenon of the modern world.

Fassbinder himself is an avowed homosexual, and does not try to hide the fact. His films have centered around the condition of unalterable sexual predilections, conditions which he sees as somewhat fixed. Although offering a minimum number of psychological reasons why such conditions should exist, Fassbinder has always concentrated on the reality of the moment. The acceptance of that reality constitutes a major thematic principle which flows through all of his works, and reappears here in the *Thirteen Moons*.

Many of the critics who have reviewed the film contend that *Thirteen Moons* is at once exhilarating and darkly comic. They have reacted to the structure in which Fassbinder uses the emotional Elvira as an almost comic personality



who lives in a world where it is dangerous to follow one's heart. The impulses to alter himself into a woman was accomplished by modern science, and thus allowed the hero-heroine to permanently alter himself because of a heartfelt desire. That same heart leads the heroine to her eventual ruin.

As a film dealing with problems of transsexuals, *Thirteen Moons* appears to be ineffective. Fassbinder has placed his characters in such bizarre emotional and psychological landscapes that real connections between their predicaments and those of real people are impossible. Instead, there exists a Fellini landscape upon which the characters move, attached to the real world only through the past and unable to cope within the nightmarish present. That technique is never grounds for a functional social drama.

In *The Year of Thirteen Moons* should do much for Fassbinder's career, but it will do little for the predicament of the transsexual. It is, however, unfair to ask Fassbinder to explore that question and to provide answers. That is not his style, and it is not the kind of film he makes.

What questions the film does raise, however, is one of media representation of the transsexual movement. Exactly where does the transsexual stand with regards to film? Is she being studied with fairness and sensitivity, destined to be portrayed by a sensitive actress (or actor) in a role that attempts to align the experience with the understanding of general audiences?

In Fassbinder's film, we see the transsexual more as an instrument, a tool or metaphor, than as a real human being who has undergone the trauma of a sex change. The film is being widely advertised as a movie about transsexualism, but that is far from the truth. On its own, the film may very well stand as a masterpiece, as many of this brilliant director's films are destined to become. But as a transsexual film, it does not live up to the necessary qualifications of a work that will alter the general public's perceptions of this growing and exceptionally complex phenomenon.

NEW YORK CITY AUDITIONS

Vera



The auditions for one of the world's most unique films continue. This time, the locale is New York City, one of the international centers for transsexualism. Once again, the promise of glory and international recognition have drawn transsexuals from all over the East Coast. They seek fame and fortune, glamour and glitter as only Hollywood can offer. "Vera" is a drawing card to the transsexual community from coast to coast, and the auditions in New York City proved to be no exception.





They came from all walks of life, seeking that elusive ray of stardom that comes to so very few. They gave their all for the chance.



The producers of "Vera" have promised a bonanza film, an epic dealing with the world of transsexualism.



CONNECTION

Continued from page 35

sex change operation itself. For these people, the decision to return to their natural sex is still available, with operations that allow for the removal of the implants, and the reversal of the hormonal treatments. The emotional and psychological reversal are oftentimes the most difficult for these transsexuals, and that is where the basic problems enter into the picture.

The pre-operative transsexual is not engaged in making himself, or herself, up as a member of the opposite sex simply for the shock value, or because women's clothing acts as a fetish upon him. His desires are rooted deep within his own sexual identity, and it is there that he or she feels himself to be a member of the opposite sex. Crossing over is a mental thing, much more than a physical transformation. Thus, it is with that mental obsession that physicians and psychologists must deal, resolving the conflict prior to a major decision to have surgery.

The decision to have the operation, for many transsexuals, is akin to finding a newfound freedom. Many are deliriously happy after the operation, finding for the first time in their lives their physical identity to be consistent with their mental self-image. Renee Richards is a classical example of a sex change where the female is much more in tune with herself than the male had been. In numerous interviews, Miss Richards has testified to the feeling of being whole, to having completed herself as a result of the operation. And, like many successful sex change operatives, Miss Richards speaks about the adjustment she had to make once she became a woman.

Those adjustments oftentimes are the most difficult and traumatic for a sex change transsexual. They involve learning

an entirely new code of manner, dress and habits. Speech, gesture, social graces and even thought processes are different for a woman, and the transsexuals who cross over onto the other side must rebuild themselves almost from the ground up.

This adjustment is oftentimes regarded with something less than the full seriousness which it deserves. A transvestite may think that he has made that adjustment simply by dressing as a woman. In fact, he remains a man wearing women's clothing, and not a male whose identity is that of a woman. The pre-operative transsexual may feel that the adjustment has been completed, but his position still remains somewhat locked because of the presence of his male genitalia.

The post operative transsexual finds himself in a position where there is no choice—the adjustment must be made. And it is within this critical area that experts who deal with transsexualism are employing the basic elements of transsexualism and transvestism to make certain that transsexuals contemplating surgery are well prepared for the eventual trauma of their change.

In many clinics and private social groups where transsexuals are treated, standard pre-operative techniques are now being employed. One of these requires that a transsexual who desires surgery be made to spend a year prior to that surgery as a woman. This means dressing every day in women's clothing, and assuming all the social roles that being a woman incorporates. During this trial basis period, the transsexuals are watched closely by psychiatrists and social workers; they meet regularly with their peers; and they are put through an intensive program whereby self-knowledge and understanding is allowed to grow. For these pre-operatives, transvestism and pre-operative transsexualism helps to relieve much of the doubt and fear they might possess over making that final commitment.

Still, even with the safety valve procedures now being employed, there are some transsexuals who cross the line and suffer dramatically as a result of their decision. For these people, there are now hundreds of clinics and therapy groups designed to help them make their adjustment to their new sex.

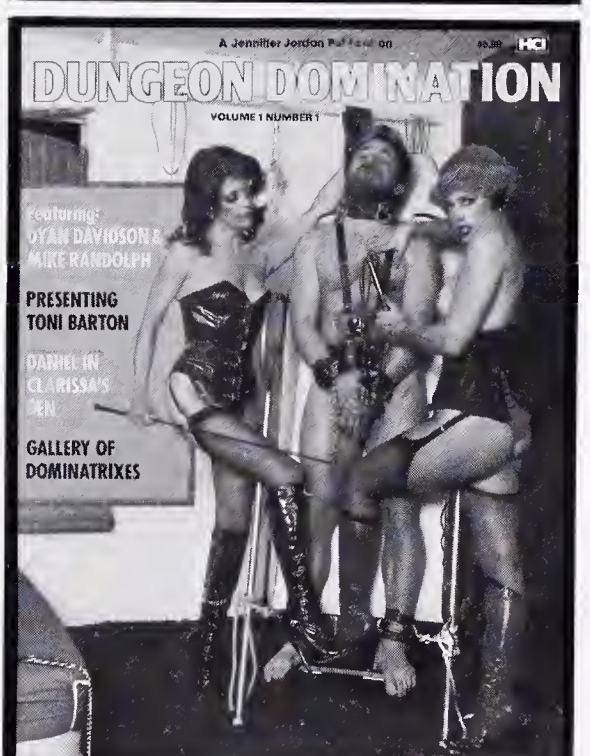
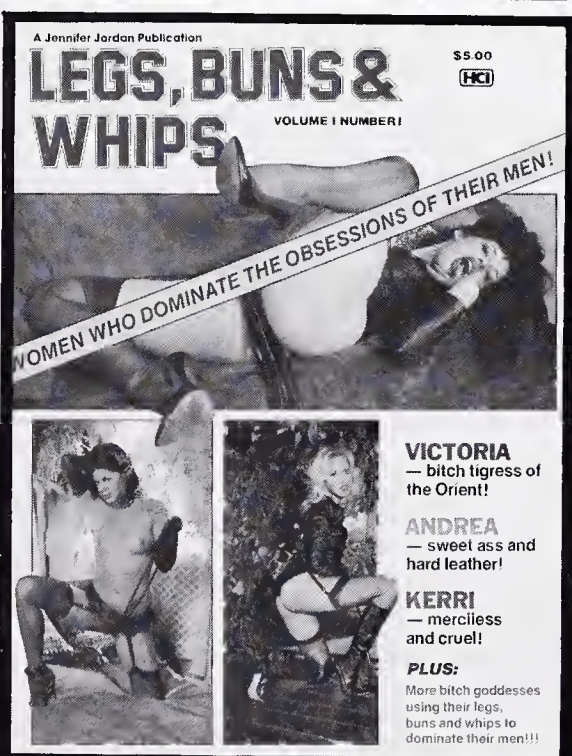
One group, located in New York City, specializes in teaching male to female transsexuals the proper way to be a woman. Their clinics not only deal with the mental problems of a transsexual after surgery, but also with the social and physical problems. They educate the transsexual about make-up, beauty care, dress and social graces. It is their intent to help the transsexual adjust to his new role, to give him an even chance of succeeding in his new sexual role. So far, these clinics have realized a certain amount of success.

As we move into the 1980's, the vast difference that exists between transvestites and transsexuals should become more apparent to the general public. Fashion itself will most certainly dictate the fate of the transvestite. As unisex fashions develop, and as men are given more and more freedom with their dress codes, the transvestite may all but disappear. Today, many men partake of the beauty aides and styles that were once the private domain of women. And as time continues, this phenomenon should become more widespread.

As the presence of the transvestite dwindles, however, the number of transsexuals should rise. That is the prediction of most experts in the field. As surgical techniques improve, and psychological and emotional understanding reach new zeniths of sophistication, the transsexual will most certainly discover newer and safer roads open to them. And it will be during the decade of the 80's that the confusion that exists today between transvestism and transsexualism will come to an end.

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